

Lesson Overview

The ICS Organization: Part II lesson introduces you to the:

- Roles and responsibilities of the General Staff.
- Expansion and contraction of the ICS organization.

General Staff

Expansion of the incident may also require the delegation of authority for the performance of the other management functions. The people who perform the other four management functions are designated as the General Staff. The General Staff is made up of four Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.



ICS Section Chiefs and Deputies

As mentioned previously, the person in charge of each Section is designated as a **Chief**. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their Section to meet the needs of the situation. Each of the Section Chiefs may have a Deputy, or more than one, if necessary. The Deputy:

- May assume responsibility for a specific portion of the primary position, work as relief, or be assigned other tasks.
- Should always be as proficient as the person for whom he or she works.

In large incidents, especially where multiple disciplines or jurisdictions are involved, the use of Deputies from other organizations can greatly increase interagency coordination.

Operations Section

Until Operations is established as a separate Section, the Incident Commander has direct control of tactical resources. The Incident Commander will determine the need for a separate Operations Section at an incident or event. When the Incident Commander activates an Operations Section, he or she will assign an individual as the Operations Section Chief.

Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is normally the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand.

Operations Section: Maintaining Span of Control

The Operations function is where the tactical fieldwork is done. Therefore, most incident resources are assigned to the Operations Section. Often the most hazardous activities are carried out there. Because of this, it is necessary to monitor carefully the number of resources that report to any one supervisor. The following supervisory levels can be added to help manage span of control:

- **Divisions** are used to divide an incident geographically.
- **Groups** are used to describe functional areas of operation.
- **Branches** are used when the number of Divisions or Groups extends the span of control and can be either geographical or functional.

Operations Section: Divisions

Divisions are used to divide an incident **geographically**. The person in charge of each Division is designated as a **Supervisor**. How the area is divided is determined by the needs of the incident.

The most common way to identify Divisions is by using alphabet characters (A, B, C, etc.). Other identifiers may be used as long as Division identifiers are known by assigned responders.

The important thing to remember about ICS Divisions is that they are established to **divide an incident into geographical areas of operation**.



Operations Section: Groups

Groups are used to describe **functional** areas of operation. The person in charge of each Group is designated as a **Supervisor**.



The kind of Group to be established will also be determined by the needs of an incident. Groups are normally labeled according to the job that they are assigned (e.g., Human Services Group, Infrastructure Support Group, etc.). Groups will work wherever their assigned task is needed and are not limited geographically.

Operations Section: Divisions and Groups

Divisions and Groups can be used together on an incident. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization. One does not supervise the other. When a Group is working within a Division on a special assignment, Division and Group Supervisors must closely coordinate their activities.



Operations Section: Establishing Branches

If the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control, it may be necessary to establish another level of organization within the Operations Section, called Branches. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. Deputies may also be used at the Branch level. Branches can be divided into Groups or Divisions—or can be a combination of both.



Operations Section: Branches, Other Factors

While span of control is a common reason to establish Branches, additional considerations may also indicate the need to use these Branches, including:

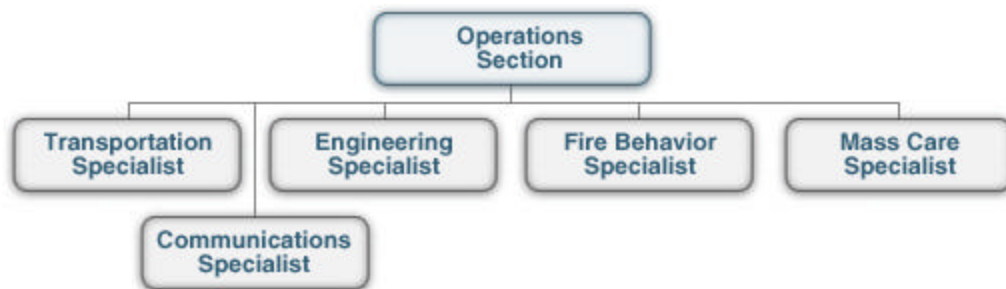
- **Multidiscipline Incidents.** Some incidents have multiple disciplines involved (e.g., Firefighting, Health & Medical, Hazardous Materials, Public Works & Engineering, Energy, etc.) that may create the need to set up incident operations around a functional Branch structure.
- **Multijurisdiction Incidents.** In some incidents it may be better to organize the incident around jurisdictional lines. In these situations, Branches may be set up to reflect jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Very Large Incidents.** Very large incidents may be organized using geographic or functional Branches.

Operations Section: Expanding and Contracting

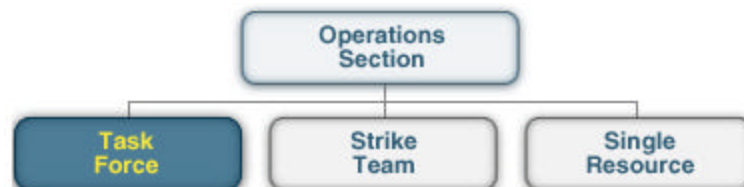
The Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief at an incident may work initially with only a few single resources or staff members.



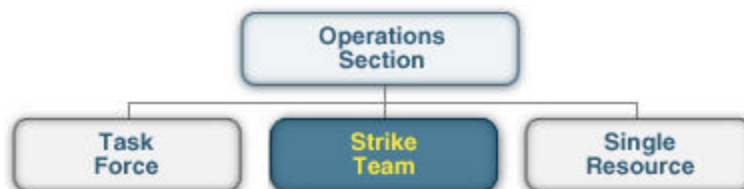
The Operations Section usually develops from the bottom up. The organization will expand to include needed levels of supervision as more and more resources are deployed.



Task Forces are a combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Leader. Task Forces can be versatile combinations of resources and their use is encouraged. The combining of resources into Task Forces allows for several resource elements to be managed under one individual's supervision, thus lessening the span of control of the Division/Group Supervisor.



Strike Teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader. Strike Teams are highly effective management units. The foreknowledge that all elements have the same capability and the knowledge of how many will be applied allows for better planning, ordering, utilization and management.

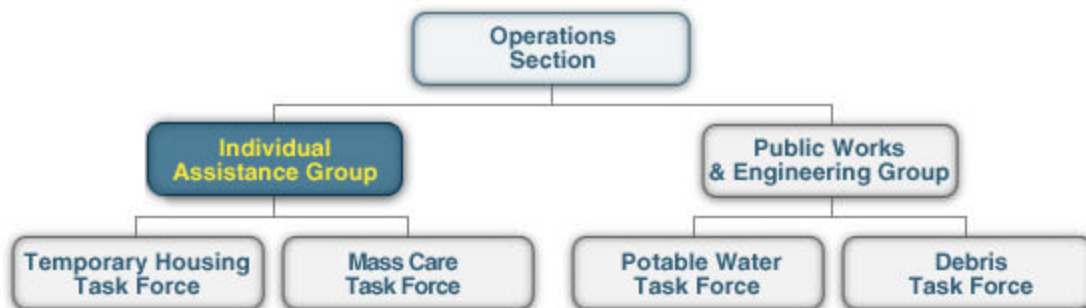


Operations Section: Expanding and Contracting (continued)

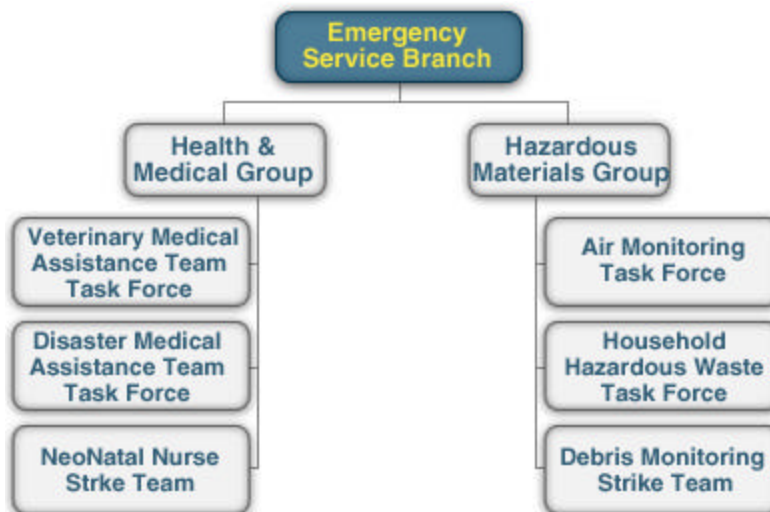
Single Resources may be individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor that can be used at an incident.



As we covered earlier, it is important to maintain an effective span of control. Maintaining span of control can be done easily by grouping resources into Divisions or Groups.



Another way to add supervision levels is to create Branches within the Operations Section.



Operations Section: Expanding and Contracting (continued)

At some point, the Operations Section and the rest of the ICS organization will contract. The decision to contract will be based on the achievement of tactical objectives. Demobilization planning begins upon activation of the first personnel and continues until the ICS organization ceases operation.

**Planning Section**

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section and designate a Planning Section Chief. If no Planning Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all planning functions. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any needed additional staffing.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident intelligence and information.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Conducting long-range and/or contingency planning.
- Developing plans for demobilization as the incident winds down.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.

Planning Section: Units

The Planning Section can be further staffed with four Units. In addition, Technical Specialists who provide special expertise useful in incident management and response may also be assigned to work in the Planning Section. Depending on the needs, Technical Specialists may also be assigned to other Sections in the organization.



Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have a verbal or written Incident Action Plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with direction for actions to be implemented during the operational period identified in the plan.

Incident Action Plans include the measurable tactical operations to be achieved and are prepared around a timeframe called an **Operational Period**.

Incident Action Plan Elements

At the simplest level, all Incident Action Plans must have four elements:

- What do we want to do?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if someone is injured?

Logistics Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Logistics Section at the incident, and designate an individual to fill the position of the Logistics Section Chief. If no Logistics Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all logistical functions. The size of the incident, complexity of support needs, and the incident length will determine whether a separate Logistics Section is established. Additional staffing is the responsibility of the Logistics Section Chief.

Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs, including:

- Obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing support transportation.
- Providing medical services to incident personnel.

Logistics Section: Branches and Units

The Logistics Section can be further staffed by two Branches and six Units.

Not all of the Units may be required; they will be established based on need. The titles of the Units are descriptive of their responsibilities.

Finance/Administration Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident and designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

If no Finance/Administration Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all finance functions.

Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Contract negotiation and monitoring.
- Timekeeping.
- Cost analysis.
- Compensation for injury or damage to property.

Finance/Administration Section: Increasing Use

More and more larger incidents are using a Finance/Administration Section to monitor costs. Smaller incidents may also require certain Finance/Administration support.

For example, the Incident Commander may establish one or more Units of the Finance/Administration Section for such things as procuring special equipment, contracting with a vendor, or making cost estimates for alternative response strategies.

Finance/Administration Section: Units

The Finance/Administration Section may staff four Units. Not all Units may be required; they will be established based on need.

